The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

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Notes of the Month.

On more occasions than one the address delivered by the President of the British Association has greatly stimulated thought and led to fruitful discussion, not only amongst those of scientific bent, but also amongst persons concerned chiefly with the general problems of human life and thought. Thus, in all probability, many of our readers will recall the effect of the memorable address delivered by Professor Tyndall when the British Association met in Belfast in the year 1874. How many sermons it inspired, what innumerable essays it called forth! Religious people fancied they detected in it an attempt to undermine the foundations of faith. Accordingly there commenced a wordy conflict, in which science took one side and religion another, and so successfully was the real issue confused that many persons thought —as some mistakenly still think—that religion and science are necessarily and essentially opposed the one to the other. But the real point of opposition was between the over-zealous dogmatists on both sides, who, not content with their own sphere of research and the truths connected therewith, claimed to speak with authority on all things in heaven and earth. So long as science dealt with the history of the world, sought to re-tell the story of creation, re-constructed for later ages the marvellous processes by means of which man and his natural environment came into being, it had a right to speak, despite the often abusive protests of those who defended traditional views. Who would for a moment underestimate the benefit to truth due to the writings of men like Professor Huxley? But when in the ardour of their onslaught against blind dogmatism some scientists themselves became dogmatic, and deemed only that real which the methods of physical science could demonstrate, it was time for someone to call a truce and recall men to their proper tasks. Let the heat of controversy subside, and it might then appear that those formerly opposed might, as allies, undertake a common task, one concerned with the deepest and most persistent of human longings, the craving for some assurance of continued life beyond the grave.

Such was the task undertaken by Sir Oliver Lodge when speaking as Presi-

dent of the British Association in Birmingham last month. No one could do so more fittingly or with greater effectiveness. On many scientific subjects he speaks with the most complete authority, while yielding to none in his conviction that religion and its problems are deserving of the greatest reverence, and will repay the most painstaking investigation. These two compelling interests find illustration in his scientific eminence as a great physicist, and in his intimate connection with the Society for Psychical Research. It was inevitable that he had little sympathy with the dogmatic scientists who would deny the possibility of a future life just because in another province they do not happen to have found the proof. But not content with reproving the scientific dogmatist whose conclusions are not preceded by proper investigation of psychical facts, Sir Oliver Lodge himself made a most interesting confession of positive value, claiming "that already the facts so examined have convinced me that memory and affection are not limited to that association with matter by which alone they can manifest themselves here and now, and that personality persists beyond bodily death." There are doubtless many who have the assurance of faith, and deem it sufficient even if science is silent regarding it, but it is surely a matter of the deepest interest if ultimately the science once thought antagonistic to faith should prove religion's best ally and the confirmer of that hope which springs eternal in the human breast. It is not the least merit of Sir Oliver Lodge's impressive address that it should close in a strain of mingled appeal and optimism:—"Men and brethren, we are trustees of the truth of the physical universe as scientifically explored; let us be faithful to our trust. Genuine religion has its roots deep down in the heart of humanity and in the reality of things. It is not surprising that by our methods we fail to grasp it; the actions of the Deity make no appeal to any special sense, only a universal appeal; and our methods are, as we know, incompetent to detect complete uniformity. There is a principle of relativity here, and unless we encounter flaw, or jar, or change, nothing in us responds. We are deaf and blind therefore to the immanent grandeur around us unless we have insight enough to appreciate the whole, and to recognise in the woven fabric of existence, flowing steadily from the loom in an infinite progress towards perfection, the ever-growing garment of a transcendent God."

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION.

Report of Sermon by the Bishop of Birmingham.

On September 14th a civic service was held at the Cathedral Church of St. Philip, Birmingham. It was attended by the President of the British Association as well as by the Lord Mayor (Colonel Martineau), members of the Corporation, and representatives of the University. There was a crowded congregation. The lessons were read by Sir Oliver Lodge.

The preacher was the Bishop of Birmingham (Dr. Russell Wakefield). He said that in tendering to the British Association the welcome of the Anglican Church in that city, and in expressing the earnest hope that the deliberations of the present meeting might be helpful to the cause of science, he was speaking no mere formal words. He was rather the grateful debtor making an honest acknowledgment of the benefits received which were ever helping him and his fellow-workers in the labour to which they had devoted their lives. They were constantly reminded of the fact that in past days there was active antagonism between the theologians and the scientists, although some great men had arisen who were representative of both schools, and Birmingham had furnished one notable example of that combination. It was best to let the lessons of the campaign teach each of the contending parties to work amicably one with the other in the future. At any rate such was his earnest desire, for he was conscious that he would be immeasurably poorer in the possibilities of helping humanity were he not

able to use the results of the devoted energies of men of science. How stupid to suggest that there must be a barrier between knowledge and belief. Even the most sceptical acknowledged that there were matters as to which he could not yet say that he had scientific certainty, but which he nevertheless accepted, and on which to some extent his life was based. He was speaking to those to whom knowledge was precious, and he desired not to thwart but to encourage their research and inquiry, and to assure them, without any pretence of patronage, that the Church of Christ regarded their labours as having the inspiration, the power, and the favour of that great Divine Being who had given us all our duty in this career on earth, just as he would give it in the ages to which mankind was passing with the advantage of the training of three score years and ten upon one of his smaller worlds. Faith had some place even in the realm of science. How large or how small a space might be occupied by faith varied, but it was as essential to the complete man as was inquiry. They desired knowledge, first for the understanding of the purpose of the Great Architect of the Universe; secondly, for the promotion of human happiness and efficiency. When the philosopher said that the pleasures of the intellect were greater than those of the affections, they were conscious that either the writer was trying to avoid the sense of corporate responsibility, or that he was attempting to read into the pleasures of intellect a deeper meaning than was generally ascribed to them. The scientist gave himself to great ends modestly, and went slowly that he might go safely, but such considerations troubled not the ignorant nor the prejudiced. One who stood at the cross was a woman who was probably not a very deep theologian, but he was glad she was there, because her presence reminded us that there were springs of knowledge which rise in the very centre of our nature, and which sometimes carry us to the truth where the cold calculation of the brain would never take us. The affections would not be ruled out of human affairs. He came across a chapter of Lessing, in which he wrote—"Were God to come to him holding in one hand the absolute truth and in the other simply the guide to truth, saying, 'Choose,' he would take the guide and not the truth, saying, 'For me the labour, the toil, and the delight of search.'" That was the cry of living, striving humanity. Even in "Eureka" there was disappointment, for the struggle was past, the search was ended. It was only in the realisation of the usefulness of our completed work that we could be satisfied when labour was over. He dwelt on the wonderful scientific advance of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, bringing with it our greater knowledge of the marvellous cosmos, the results of research in the domain of biology, and the discoveries in scientific medicine of a Pasteur and a Lister. Whatever religious teachers may have felt as to what was commonly called evolution fifty years ago, there was not one of them who was not thankful to-day that the Great Creator's scheme of the intertwining of his creatures had been accepted as scientific knowledge. It was the clergy, as they passed from home to home in some of the poorer districts of our great cities, who could best realise how marvellously scientists had lightened the weight of human suffering, and added to the efficiency of those toilers who were the greatest "capital" of the country. But had not science much to gain from religion? If the knowledge of God and the welfare of humanity were ends, was not the Church of Christ the most potent factor to ensure these ideals being kept alive? He protested against the notion that the Church was non-experimenting and non-inquiring. A Church that was opposed to experiment and to inquiry must die. But the clergy were not unteachable. They might be at first reluctant to lose hold of some inherited traditions, but history showed that they were not over-tenacious of anything which had been blindly accepted. Let inquiry be spiritual. They could not reduce mind to a mathematical definition, and there were bye-ways along which they must be content not to travel. But let the masters of science go forth

to their great work strengthened by the gathering of the week, and determined to be to this earth what God intended them to be.

Special services also were held at St. Chad's (R.C.) Cathedral, where the Archbishop pontificated at high mass, and the sermon was preached by the Rev. A. Corite, S.J.; at Carr's Lane Congregational, the Central Hall (Wesleyan), and the Church of the Messiah (Unitarian).

Report of Sermon by the Dean of Manchester.

Preaching on September 14th at the Parish Church of St. Martin's, Bishop Welldon (Dean of Manchester) recalled the circumstances in which the British Association was formed, and the fact that a clergyman was virtual founder. There had been times when the harmony between the Church and the Association was more or less threatened. On the publication of Lyell's "Elements of Geology," and again of Darwin's "Origin of Species," there was in religious minds grave anxiety lest the theories of science should contravene the faith of Jesus Christ. But he thought he might say that that harmony had been restored, because between the votaries of religion on the one hand and the votaries of science on the other there had been an acceptance of two vital principles. One was that no Church nor anybody speaking or professing to speak in the name of a Church was entitled to set any bar whatever to the progress of scientific inquiry. That act, if it were possible, would be an irreligious act. Then there was the spiritual world, which was not entirely cognisable by the accepted methods and processes of natural science. It is not what man was in his origin, but what he is, that matters, and it was his (the preacher's) belief that science would never reach its true dignity unless it was moved by the spirit of the living God. He went on to indicate certain results of the religious temper within the sphere of natural science. It was the religious spirit of science which enabled them to realise more and more the mystery of the universe. It was his own judgment that the mistake which was made on the scientific side in the relation of science to religion fifty years or so ago was this —Men of science said, "We know the laws of nature, and all that is contrary to those laws is incredible, if not impossible." What was the answer to that argument? Was it not this, "We do not know the laws of nature; we are only just beginning to know them. There are untravelled fields spread before us. We are only on the threshold of the knowledge which will some day be ours." We must be ready to welcome any knowledge that might strike in upon us from any source, clinging to the assurance that all knowledge was God's truth, and could not prove ultimately inharmonious with the revelation of His will. Spirit, not matter, was the fundamental reality. The unity underlying phenomena pointed consistently to God as the one mind working through the natural world—one mind, one will, one law, permeating nature. There was more and more room for mutual sympathy between students.

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell."

That was the spirit which should animate all scientific and religious inquiry.

THE CREATION STORY.

By Rev. D. J. Williams.

"*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread, till thou returnest to the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art and unto dust thou wilt return.*"—Genesis iii. 19.

In some respects these words have had an unfortunate influence on man's attitude towards labour and the necessity of it. It plainly says that labour is a punishment, a penalty, designed as an eternal curse on man, consequent on the disobedience of the primeval parents. It assumes, as a matter of course, that it is a curse to be obliged to labour, to eat bread "in the sweat of his face." This assumption is necessary to the whole fabric of the story, else there is no point to it. There can hardly be any question that the story is mythical, and represents an ancient

attempt on the part of Easterns to solve certain mysteries connected with the appearance and the circumstances of man on earth. The story is not necessarily Jewish, except that the Jews adopted it and put it forward as an explanation of questions perplexing to the human mind.

The whole story, mythical though it is, is a very human and, in some respects, a very true one. It is futile as an attempt to explain mysteries connected with man, but a true delineation, as far as man's weakness, ignorance, folly, and his actual condition, taken as a whole, in all ages, is concerned. Man is well described in several of his moods. The drudgery he is chained to is described with force and vigour. The sorrowful burden of labouring hard years of brutal contest with nature and circumstances for the bare necessities of existence ; then a returning to the ground " from whence he came "—this is the natural history of the outward life of the majority of men. " Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return " fittingly describes the outward and perishable life of the million. It is a helpless, hopeless life viewed at the best, a breeder of pessimism and despair. This explains to some extent, no doubt, the patient acquiescence of the agricultural labourer in his lot, the pessimism engrained in him, and the gentle despair, which is the result of his blank outlook on life. The " creation myth " contains truths which fittingly describe man in his material aspect, and as such must be respected ; but the main object illuminating life's mysteries is not successful, and is no adequate contribution.

The reverence with which religious minds have regarded the Bible is responsible for the literal acceptance of the Creation Story. That the myth has been taken seriously, rather than as a work of imagination, all must acknowledge. The whole scheme of Christian atonement, sacrifice, and salvation has been built on it. Without this myth of primeval man and the primeval world, the idea of a " fall of man " could never have been entertained. The whole body of orthodox teaching with regard to the life, mission, nature, and sacrifice of Christ have rested primarily on the supposition that there had been a " fall of man " and the necessity of his redemption from so evil a plight ; that Christ came of set purpose to deliver men from the curse, and to re-instate them in favour with Almighty power, and that only the atonement of the " Eternal Son," by voluntary sacrifice, in compassion for men, could work the infinite satisfaction demanded by the Eternal Father. Did Christ actually and literally perform this stupendous task ? Then the claims made for him are established for all time. Thus the importance of " the fall " in the orthodox scheme is first-class, and cannot be smoothed over. This dilemma orthodox Christians of the uncompromising type sooner or later will have to face : the establishing the truth of the Creation Story, or to find their whole scheme of salvation toppling over like a house of cards. There is no escape. Some bold spirits frankly disavow the doctrine of a primeval fall, and consequently the whole superstructure built on it by popular orthodox theology.

The Creation myth is a purely imaginative picture, with much point in it, it is true, but still imaginative, filling a place which previously had been vacant. It may be described as an attempt to answer the questions—When and how did man first appear on earth ? Why does man suffer ? Why has he to labour painfully ? Why does sorrow mar his happiness ? These are far-reaching questions. They cannot be answered without profound knowledge and intimate acquaintance with man's nature, and deep penetration into the mysteries which surround him. Perhaps it is true to say that they will never be satisfactorily answered. The modern attitude to such questions deserves respect. It is a reverent, trustful attitude, namely, to recognise boldly that there are mysteries which have not been satisfactorily explained. We do not, however, regard all so-called mysteries with respect, because there are real mysteries which cannot be explained.

There are sufficient reasons why the Creation myth cannot be regarded as an adequate explanation of the primeval man's appearance on earth and the conditions to which he was obliged to conform. It may be regarded as natural for ancient philosophers to regard labour as a penalty. It is instinct in man to ask the reason why, and if a sound solution is not forthcoming, it is human to offer the most plausible solution. In conformity with man's inherent curiosity, the author proceeds to demonstrate that labour is a curse brought on men due to the disobedience of the first man in the Garden of Eden. The question had suggested itself, "Why has man to labour?" Not finding an adequate answer ready, the ancient philosopher proceeds to invent a very ingenious story—true in incidental details to the life most men live—that man must have committed some grave offence not easily forgiven, else the fall from innocency would never have happened and the curse would never have been inflicted.

The philosophy responsible for this story considered that a state of ignorance with innocency was better than a state of knowledge and a full sense of responsibility. "Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise"; but this kind of ignorance is nothing better than living in a fool's paradise, does not help us, and is not satisfying. This philosophy is not acceptable to-day. It is not better to live at ease in innocence and ignorance. Such an existence is unworthy of man.

The teaching of the Creation myth is at fault here, for it assumes that freedom from care, irresponsibility, the placid content of animals, innocency with regard to good and evil is the natural condition of things for human beings. The reverse is true. In all walks of life knowledge is respected and prized. A man full of responsibility is preferred to the careless, the shiftless, and one not responsible for his actions. A state of innocence and freedom from care—held up in the story as the ideal—are accompaniments only of a low state of development and characteristic of primitive man alone. It requires a very primitive philosopher, indeed, to hold up such a state as desirable; and on this account, if for no other, the story is probably a very old one, going back in one form or another to the earliest times when men began to think.

As a result of the fall from innocency, the primeval man was made to bear the penalty of having to labour for his daily bread. The primitive philosophy regards this as an unmitigated misfortune, a sorrowful necessity befalling him and his progeny for ever as a result of the knowledge of good and evil which had become his lot. The Creation myth here states a truth, but picturesquely so; a perception of a better and worse, knowledge of good and evil creates the necessity for action. It calls forth initiative, demands responsibility, care, and forethought. It regards labour in a lurid light. It frankly abhors the necessity for labour. To primitive man industry was like penal servitude. It tamed his savage nature, brought his passions under control, and his lusts within bounds, while it limited his freedom and brought home to him a sense of responsibility. All this is abhorrent to primitive and savage minds. The very essence of a free barbarous life is its irresponsibility. From the beginning, the necessity for labour changed much of this. It sobered and brought to a painful sense of responsibility primitive and barbarous men. Once man began to know himself he could not help recognising his incapacity, ignorance, his actual condition in contrast with an ideal which labour, care, forethought, and systematic work could realise.

From the civilised point of view, labour in itself never was nor could be a curse. It is the cultivated man who can most readily appreciate the poet's words:—

> "Satan finds some mischief still
> For idle hands to do."

Intelligent labour is far removed from mischief. It helps to build up the ideal conditions which we all hope will yet be found active on the earth.

While the primitive mind is averse

to labour, it is also very materialistic. It regards the outward life only. The Creation myth sorrowfully contemplates the hard necessity laid on man to eat his bread "in the sweat of his face." It is unmitigated drudgery. There is no relief from the grind "till thou returnest to the ground." There is no spiritual life contemplated here, no joyful loving service for others' good inculcated, no satisfaction in occupations which bring out the high powers of the workers. "Dust thou art, to dust thou wilt return." The creative power of man is not recognised. The inner life is silent. The forces which create order, beauty, harmony, and the life of the spirit are all ignored. The myth recognises them not: years of labour and sorrow, and then the grave receives the good and bad. This is fatalism. Nothing could be less inspiring. The immortal hope of Christians had not dawned.

Viewed in the light of the hopeless materialism of the story, life indeed is full of sorrow and trouble. It is not worth living. The hum-drum round of stupefying labour, without any relief to the monotony, is not a life for aspiring man. Labour should be active, intelligent, joyous, creative: otherwise it is a curse.

Thus it is plain the Creation myth breaks down in essential things. It speaks truth incidentally where the primitive philosopher is speaking from real observation and experience. It is hopelessly false with regard to the higher and true life which it is not able to appreciate.

If, therefore, there was no fall from grace, there never was the necessity for the infinite satisfaction of the Divine sacrifice of the Eternal Son to restore man to his first estate, and so the whole structure of popular orthodoxy breaks down.

It is very necessary to show that old myths, which no longer can be believed in, which in themselves are demoralising, are no fit subjects of veneration to men holding the Christian faith and having hopes of immortality.

"No joy so great but runneth to an end,
No hap so hard but may in time amend."

IDEALS OF PRESBYTERIANISM.

By Rev. John Barron.

Nations, institutions, and individuals are all, more or less under the influence of strong fixed ideas which give purpose to their existence and help to mould their history. "As a man thinketh so is he." Such dominating thoughts are called Ideals. They may be compared to the vision from a mountain-top, to which a traveller has climbed, for the purpose of seeing how the land lies, and the memory of the vision is something to be kept firm hold of, down in the valleys and the forests, where the outlook is hemmed in. Because of the vision the traveller pursues his path more intelligently and with better heart, because he knows more clearly where he wants to go and how to get there.

The Christian Church, as a whole, has its ideal, and that is the will and purpose of the Master. The Protestant section has, in addition to this, a special ideal, and that is the right of private judgment. Presbyterianism, which comprises a very large section of Protestantism, has also a further special ideal, which might be expressed in the following terms—"Under Christ, as King and Head, a well organised and wisely governed Church, in which learning and piety shall be honoured, the basis being a dignified and restrained democracy, guaranteeing the security which makes liberty possible."

The tercentenary of Presbyterianism in Ireland makes the consideration of its ideals opportune, as an understanding of these should give the key to its inner life and motive during these three hundred years.

In Scotland Church and State became, at the Reformation, practically identical, not in theory only, but in actuality. In times of great peril to the nation, which without the hold of religion would have meant demoralisation and anarchy, there was a remarkable absence of crime. Schools were established in every parish, provision was made for ministers and schoolmasters, in every household there was regular

family worship and the instruction of the young in religious knowledge.

Stern times called forth stern men, and John Knox warned the youthful King James "that in Scotland only one King reigned, and that was Christ."

The work was well begun. The looseness and indefiniteness of Congregationalism on the one hand, and the rigidity of a hierarchy on the other, were avoided. The bloodstained moors of Scotland in late years witnessed the hold that Presbyterianism had taken in the hearts of the people. It had its defects. The true meaning of liberty had to be slowly learned, though that was a watchword, and tolerance was not yet understood.

The threatened dangers to its existence from the outside, the dread of Papal tyranny and Episcopal usurpation, called forth the need of bulwarks, and these were supplied by confessions and covenants, ever a struggle to keep firm hold of ideals; for "when there is no open vision the people perish." The smoke of battle, the cloud of blood dimmed the ideal, but ever that ideal radiated its life and exercised its constructive power, and here in Ireland the yearning for wider liberty, the chafing of mind and conscience against what proved fetters to the soul, caused a revolt against the Confession of Faith, and the early pioneers of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland came out from the Synod of Ulster. A century passed, and once more within the General Synod there was an uprising, and the small nucleus of our Non-Subscribing Church found its numbers strengthened by a second secession. The propelling force was the Ideal of Presbyterianism towering beyond the standards of faith, which were obscuring it.

What is more natural than that the intellect should seek clear definition of religious belief? Yet, what the Christian Church has had to learn, and has still to learn, is, how limited the mind of man and how inadequate is language to grasp and to express truths which here in this physical world can only be indicated, for in their fulness they belong to higher worlds. "The Lord hath yet more light to break forth from His word."

At the present moment intuition is to the fore. The philosophers are taking us beyond the range of logic. But, what does it all amount to, but the witness of the Spirit of God with the spirit of man? The carnal man may possess a trained intellect; but there are truths which he cannot know, for they are spiritually discerned. The intellect can give us a reasonable probability of God's existence; but, to search for God with the intellect alone is like a man standing on the seashore holding a telescope to his ear, trying to see the ships in the distance. He is using the wrong faculty. Only through the Spirit, which is kin to God Himself, can God be known.

Forward, then, beyond all intellectual formulae, beyond the creeds and confessions, however good these may be in their own time and place. To these we no longer subscribe; we are free of them. Are we ready for a wide tolerance which will welcome variety of opinion, while having faith in the unity of the Spirit, which is able to keep us in the bond of peace? Small is our Church in the world, almost unknown; but great is our mission. Ours is it to demonstrate to the world that the organisation which Presbyterianism supplies means co-operation, efficiency, economy of energy in the practical work of extending Christ's kingdom upon earth, while making possible unity in the midst of diversity.

AN APPEAL FOR ATTENDANCE AT SUNDAY WORSHIP.

BY REV. PERCIVAL GODDING.

With what enthusiasm does a young minister, when first he sets his mind anxiously to preach the Gospel of God (Mark i., 14. R.V.) to souls hungering for such nourishment, learn that he has to work for that section of the Christian community known as the Non-Subscribing Presbyterians. Necessarily are we speaking of one on the *threshold* of the ministry, for up till that time he had not localized the sphere of his activities.

So, standing on the threshold of his activities, he anticipates the existence of an eagerness and an enthusiasm to hear God's Word, and to worship, Sabbath by Sabbath, Him to whom we owe our life, our health, our food.

He has chosen (he believes that God chose for him) this particular section of His vineyard called the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church. It had a special call to him, for how could he help being affected by its glorious inheritance. In his study of the history of the Christian Movement from the time of its Founder, the outstanding feature, next to the glorious martyrdoms and devotions of the first two centuries, was the Reformation. Oh! you who have never thought farther than how you can best rest after your day's toils are over, and are quite content to come to meeting on Sunday, if it is not raining, or you are not otherwise engaged, how could you understand what we owe to-day to that Reformation? But he knows and understands, and with tremendous joy he suddenly becomes aware that that community for which he has been elected is the very section, and the only section in Ireland, that professes belief in the very spirit of the Reformation.

In the sixteenth century, men suddenly awakened, claimed freedom. "We want to be Christians, for we love Christ and his and our Father," was in essence their cry. "We have been asleep all these centuries, and now find ourselves fettered by man-made creeds and beliefs. We will have none of it. God's Word, Christ's sayings and work, the Apostles' writings - in a word, THE BIBLE is the foundation of our faith. The Bible and our minds are God-given gifts, and for these we will live, and, if need be, fight and die." The young student for the ministry feels his heart beating, nay, throbbing, in unison with the heart-throbs of these awakening souls. He then looks around him to-day, and sees that still Christians are bound and creed-fettered. But no, there are some who still refuse allegiance to any man-made creed, any dogma whatsoever, and still boast of liberty to worship their Maker as Christ worshipped Him.

So the student leaves his college, and enters upon his labours. His people have inherited this glorious freedom and this enthusiasm for worship.

This is all true, and many a brave soul is proud to belong to this Church—this Church whose members are in the minority, and its cause unpopular. But they remember Christ and his chosen apostles were in the minority; and the cry "Crucify him, crucify him," testify to the Master's unpopularity.

But all the same there are some who need encouragement to-day in spite of this glorious inheritance. It is hard to keep up the old tradition; and sometimes, just sometimes, we are liable to give up and lose heart. Some say our enthusiasm is waning. Well, we are going to be bold, and take it, reader, that your enthusiasm has been somewhat damped. Then, may we suggest a simple, never-failing remedy?

Every action is preceded by a thought—an idea in man's mind. We build castles "in the air" first, and that "castle in the air" we endeavour to build up from a firm foundation on the ground.

So, first we are going to ask you to spend half an hour of slow, careful, inner thinking. Become a little child for half an hour, and ask yourself a few childlike questions. Go on somewhat in this strain, individual circumstances considered:—

"I have been in this world so many years. Where did I come from? Where shall I go to? I have life—how did I get it? I have eyes—how is that? There are many things to see—how came they, and why are they here? I have ears, and can hear; a tongue, and can speak; a mind, and can think. Why? Of course if I had not these I could not work for my living. Why do I work for my living? So that I may live! But steady! Am I not in a circle now? Why do I live?—so that I can work for my living. Why do I work for my living?—so that I can live. No, that will not do; there must be something else. *There are others.* Ah! yes; I live for others. Why are there others? Oh! they are there to live too. Why? So that they can work for their living

and for others too. Why? Perhaps, too, you might say: "I have a heart to love, and to hate. Why? I can enjoy; I can laugh; I can weep."

Gentle reader, it does not matter who you are, but I can leave you thus meditating. These childlike considerations will not worry you; you will go on further than I have taken you, and then you will kneel down and say: "Oh, Thou great Author of it all; oh, my Father, why have I forgotten Thee so often. In Thee I live and move and have my being. . . ."

Friend, when the half-hour is up, you will understand the meaning of Sunday worship more than ever before. Your enthusiasm will receive an added impetus. You will see that you go regularly to meeting, for you will not be ashamed to openly love and worship God. You will send your children to Sunday school punctually and regularly too. Train up a child (Prov. xxii. 6.) Yes, and you will do something further. Mr. So-and-so, he doesn't go anywhere—I'll speak to him.

Two or three months later you will go to your minister and say: "Don't you think we might try to start some week-night meeting here? Look at all the young men and women in this town who sit on the window-sills with listless faces; they would enjoy a pleasant evening such as we could provide for them." He would reply: "Yes, I have often thought of this. I wanted encouragement by offers of help. We will begin this autumn, shall we? "No," you will reply; "we'll begin this week!"

Friend, think this over. Enthusiasm for God is a glorious thing . . . but do not let it sleep. It lies in your power to begin another Reformation!

ADDRESS BY REV. T. MUNN, AT PADIHAM.

The Rev. T. Munn, who has accepted the pastorate of the Nazareth Unitarian Chapel, Padiham, preached his first sermon as pastor recently to a large congregation. The rev. gentleman, who has twice previously occupied the pulpit, had a large congregation, and his address was highly appreciated. He comes from Greyabbey, in the North of Ireland, and succeeds the Rev. J. E. Jenkins, who resigned the pastorate about twelve months ago. In the course of his sermon, the text of which was "Other men laboured, ye are entered into their labours," the reverend gentleman said:—

"Our modern civilisation that we boast so loudly is of no mushroom growth. Many a spasm has clutched the throbbing heart of humanity in order that we might enjoy some modern boon; many a life has been given by those who wished to leave the world better than they found it; many a cruel war, many a bitter strife has been waged in the cause of progress, and many of the things that we now enjoy and value so little have been gained at the cost of blood and tears. What sacrifice was needed e'er the common people were allowed the privilege of true manhood, permitted to assume the dignity which is the rightful heritage of every child of God. The march of progress is indeed slow, but it is always sure, and levels up always in its forward movement. It does pull down for a time, but it is only in order that it may build up a grander structure out of the tottering ruin.

The franchise, the better housing system for the working class, trades unionism, and free education do not lower the prestige of the great, nor impoverish the rich, but they do lift up the down-trodden, often picking up one from the gutter and placing him on that pedestal which once was the privilege of noble birth or great wealth. The uplifting of the masses has been a slow process. Only now we are beginning to learn that there is but one true aristocracy—that of noble thoughts, lofty aspiration; one good society—where the responsibility of human brotherhood is acknowledged and man feels that indeed he is his brother's keeper. And say what you will about the frivolity and materialism, deep down at the heart of present-day civilisation there is a great ideal. No work for the social amelioration of men

—no effort for moral or spiritual enlightenment in the past has ever been in vain."

There is no time nowadays for internecine strife among the sects ; the materialistic tendency of the present age demands united effort to combat it. If there is not yet an universal Church, there should be an universal effort to fight wrong and encourage right. This is the work of the Church of Christ, and I hope that his banner will be kept flying in the breeze here on the hilltop.

"I do know from my short visits here that those members who have been laid aside from active duties, and are debarred through physical suffering from leaving their homes, their greatest regret is that they cannot take part in the services here, and join in the activities of the Chapel they love. There is no furniture, no decoration which makes a church look so well as a packed congregation, and no inspiration to the minister like well-filled pews, and I think you will feel it a privilege and an honour to worship God, where so many worthy men have worshipped in the past. And now a personal word, and I may say that I chose the words of my text because they suited me exactly on the present occasion. Other men have laboured here ; I am entering into their labours. Men great and good have occupied this pulpit in the past, and helped you to build up a congregation second to none in the body for faithfulness to Unitarian principles and enthusiastic devotion to the cause of liberal religion. I feel how difficult it will be for me to follow in their footsteps, coming as I do from a different sphere of labour, from a quiet country village in the North of Ireland to Lancashire, with its active life and seething population, its social problems, eager outlook.

It is with fear and trembling that I enter on my new duties, but sometimes God appoints the most unlikely instruments to carry His messages of peace and love to the souls of men, and, with His help and your toleration, I hope to be able to do something to justify your call. I may not have the heroism of a Cooke, nor the capacity for unrequited toil of a Pollard or a Robinson. My intellectual attainments may not rank as high as those of Mr. Street or Mr. Russel. But it has been my lot to mix with all classes and kinds of men, and, through that association, have gained a knowledge of human nature, and I may be able to do something here to be worthy of a place in the chapel records. After all, when you get beyond the dialect and the occupation, men and women are much alike. The deathbed is just the same in Padiham as Greyabbey, and marriage is the consummation of love there as here. Love and pain is not foreign to any country. The needs of the human soul are the same everywhere. Friendship is not always confined to one class or one race. So that I hope in a few weeks to become one of you as far as loyalty to this Church is concerned, and eagerness to be a help to those who require a friend. My door will never be closed, I hope, to the member who seeks help in trouble, or sympathy in sorrow.

I shall endeavour always to keep alive that spirit of enthusiasm which has actuated minister and people here in the past, and foster the union which has been the motive power behind all your work. The Unitarian's loyalty to reason and conscience and the Methodist's fire and fervour, I felt when I came here the first time that the congregation was made for me. I am praying that I may be the minister for the congregation, and that God will bless my efforts, both in the pulpit and in the homes. I may not be able to build any structure as a monument to my pastorate among you, but if I can build a tabernacle of faith and trust in God in the hearts of a few of the members that will make life sweeter, and death easier for them, then I should feel that I had not come among you in vain. I am no sectarian, though I adhere firmly to the general principles of Unitarianism, but because a man believes differently or worships at another shrine is no reason why I should deem him fit only for reproof or rebuke. I desire only physical health and moral courage to denounce wrong and applaud right, whatever

source they came from. To teach and preach the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and the example of Jesus Christ. I have no other creed, and if you asked me what I believe in other than these three leading principles of Christianity, I could not answer.

Faith is a thing to be felt, and can never adequately be expressed; it is beyond phraseology and deeper than words. But with the best intentions, I can not succeed as a minister here unless I have your sympathy and support. If we can manage to run well in double harness, then good work can be done here in the cause of God and humanity. I have been asking God's blessing on my work; might I also ask for your prayers. More things are wrought by prayer than is dreamt of in our philosophy. If God's blessing is with us then the future of Padiham might be worthy of the past, sending out men and women into the world imbued by the spirit of our faith—honest, just, faithful, pure. The real test of a Church's success is not altogether the beauty of its buildings, but the moral stamina of its members. Beauty of character excels architectural beauty. In conclusion, never forget the glorious traditions of the past; think of the great and good men who have taught and worshipped here in days gone by; strive to be worthy of the heritage that has been bequeathed to you; resolve not to diminish, but to add to; ask God's blessing on your Church's work; then the next generation will say of you with pride, as you must say of those who have gone before, other men laboured, and we have entered into their labours.

Obituary.

MR. JOHN S. M'TEAR.

Deep regret will be felt amongst a wide circle of friends and acquaintances at the announcement of the death of Mr. J. S. M'Tear, a well-known Belfast solicitor, which occurred on the 7th ult. at the Royal Ulster Yacht Club, Bangor. John Smith M'Tear, who was in his 71st year, had been in failing health for some time past, but a prolonged stay in Harrogate seemed to improve his condition. He returned to Belfast last month, and appeared in his capacity of local solicitor to the Board of Trade at the inquiry held three weeks ago into the loss of the s.s. Topic, but it was then quite evident that his wonted vigour had been impaired. He was attended during his last illness by Dr. Brice Smith, but, despite all that medical skill could do, he became worse some days ago and passed away as stated.

Deceased, who was the youngest and only surviving son of the late Mr. George M'Tear, was born at Abbeyhill, Whitehouse, on 12th December, 1842. His father, who was born in 1797, and died in 1871, was one of the principal merchants and shipowners in the town of Belfast, and was for many years a member of the Harbour Board, while it is interesting to note that he was the original agent for the Burns and other steamship lines. His son, who has now passed away, was educated privately, and afterwards studied at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, and Queen's College, Belfast. His bent was towards the legal profession, and he became a solicitor in 1865, subsequently residing in Dublin for some years and paying a visit to America. Returning to Belfast he entered into partnership with the late Mr. G. K. Smith, one of the leading solicitors of Belfast, with whom he had served his apprenticeship. On the death of Mr. Smith the business of the firm was carried on by Mr. M'Tear, who succeeded to the practice, including the representation of the Board of Trade at inquiries into wrecks. He had also an extensive private practice, and was a recognised authority on shipping law, while his practical knowledge of nautical affairs proved of great service to him in his work on behalf of the Board of Trade.

Mr. M'Tear was honorary secretary of the First Presbyterian Church (Non-Subscribing), Rosemary Street, for nearly 25 years, succeeding his uncle, the late Mr. George Kennedy Smith, who had discharged the duties of that office for about half a century. He was also one of the original governors and

proprietors of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, and was a member of the Belfast Academy and of the Incorporated Society of Authors, London. In politics he was a staunch Unionist of pronounced Imperialistic views, and he was also strongly in favour of Tariff Reform. He was a member of the Ulster Liberal Unionist Association, and of the Ulster Club, the Royal Ulster Yacht Club, and the Union Clnb, as well as the Royal Belfast Golf Club. His recreations were golf and a study of the history of playing-cards and their games. In this connection it may be mentioned that he had collected a notable card library containing some rare works, and had invented many games, including one named Basola, which was privately printed, and which enjoyed great popularity in social circles. Mr. M'Tear was also an excellent chess player, and took a keen interest in yachting. Of a genial and kindly disposition, Mr. M'Tear was held in the highest esteem by all with whom he was associated in professional and private circles, and his death will be deeply regretted by all with whom he came in contact. He was unmarried.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

By Rev. E. H. Pickering, B.A.

STORIES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

NOTE.—In the earlier of these stories I shall give very few illustrations, because the stories themselves are full of interest. Tolstoi regards the story of Joseph, for instance, as one of the most beautiful in the world's literature. In order to get a knowledge of the religious ideas of the Israelites (so essential for understanding these stories), every teacher ought to read Professor Peake's "Religion of Israel," price, 6d.

I. The story of Joseph. 1. *Joseph and his brethren.* Read Genesis 37. *Memory verse,* Gen. 37, 4.

Introduction. Jacob had 12 sons. They are men, but also more. They stand for 12 tribes. Point this out by means of a map. No Joseph tribe, but instead Ephraim and Manasseh, his sons; and Levi disappears, because he is head of the priests.

Lessons from the story. 1. *Joseph's pride.* His father rebukes him.

2. *Jacob's favouritism.* This was wrong, but then at that time men actually thought that God had favourites, and the Jews believed that they were God's favourites. A great mistake. A father should love all his children equally, just as God does. The Jews learnt this later, *e.g.,* Ezekiel: "All souls are mine, saith the Lord." But Jesus made this truth more real.

3. *The brothers' envy.* This was wrong. Joseph was the youngest, and they ought to have borne with him and helped him. Judah and Reuben were better.

4. *Belief in dreams.* Many people even now believe in dreams. But only rarely do they help.

I. Story of Joseph. 2. *Joseph's brethren visit Egypt.* Read Genesis 42, 6-29, 36-38. *Memory verse,* Gen. 42, 21.

Introduction. So far from the brothers' evil design succeeding, the Lord watched over Joseph. He became, by his wise foresight, the viceroy of Egypt. Then a famine arose throughout Egypt and the neighbouring lands. Egypt alone had enough and to spare, because of Joseph's wise management. His father and brothers (ignorant of what has happened to Joseph), feeling the pinch of famine, look to Egypt for corn, and thither all the brethren come, except Benjamin.

Lessons from the story. 1. *Conscience troubled the brothers* (verse 21). Even though many years had passed, the memory of their wicked deed still haunted them.

2. *Joseph's trial of his brethren.* He made believe that he thought them spies. This was not very brotherly, but then, men believed that even God liked to get His own back. We, however, know from Jesus that God would welcome the sinner back with loving mercy. (*e.g.* Parable of the Prodigal Son.)

3. *Joseph's affection.* All the while he was frightening them, he was just delighted to see them again, and wept at their distress (verse 24). And he gave them their money back.

4. *Reuben's generosity* (verse 37). Just as before he had tried to save Joseph,

he now made himself responsible for Benjamin's safety.

I. The story of Joseph. 3. *Joseph sends for his father to settle in Egypt.* Read Genesis 45. *Memory verse,* Gen. 45, 5.

Introduction. Stress of famine made Jacob let Benjamin go to Egypt, as Joseph had demanded. By a trick Joseph makes Benjamin appear a thief, and insists that he shall be left behind as a slave. Judah, however, pleads so unselfishly to be allowed to stay instead of Benjamin, that Joseph can no longer restrain himself, and all further intention of trying his brothers is dissolved in tears of joy.

Lessons from the story. 1. *Judah's generosity.* It is this that calls forth Joseph's affectionate forgiveness.

2. *Joseph's strong belief in God's providence* (verses 5 and 7). Though his brethren had sinned, God had turned their sin to good. Joseph was gladly able to heap coals of fire on their heads. *i.e.,* repay evil with good. God always does His will if we wait patiently. Sow the seed, and await the harvest. Joseph sowed the seed of a patient, noble, and active life, and found his harvest in being able to win his father and brothers to him with renewed and purified affection. Better than revenge.

3. *The wonderful family affection.* This is one of the grandest characteristics of the Jews. A Jew rarely allows a brother Jew to be in want. On this affection is based their beautiful belief in God. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." (Psalm 103, 13.)

I. The story of Joseph. 4. *The Israelites settle in Egypt.* Read Genesis 46, 28; 47, 1-12. *Memory verse,* Gen. 46, 3.

Introduction. Jacob is encouraged by God to go down to Egypt. This encouragement was necessary, because Jacob was afraid that God would stay behind in Beersheba (Jacob's home).

Lessons from the story. 1. *God's encouragement to Jacob* (46, 3). Jacob felt that God only dwelt at Beersheba, and thought that when he got to Egypt he would have no God to help him. So God said he would be with him in Egypt as in Beersheba. We sometimes make a like mistake when we think that God dwells only in the church. God is everywhere, always ready to help us to be good and comfort us in distress. (Read Psalm 139, 1-12.)

2. *The Egyptians' dislike of shepherds.* (46, 34). This was largely due to the fact that, between the years 2000 and 1600 B.C., Egypt was ruled by Syrian lords, whom they called shepherd kings

3. *Pharaoh's generosity to a good servant.* This led him to show himself in a beautiful light, when he, the great Pharaoh, received the blessing of the grateful, simple old man, Jacob.

Note.—The settlement was not in Egypt, but on its outskirts, Goshen.

Reports.

Antrim.—We are glad to learn that the Antrim congregation has purchased a very suitable site just outside the town, on which they intend building a manse, and are making a great effort to raise £1,000. Rev. C. A. Greaves, M.A., of Canterbury, preached in Antrim on August 10th, and generously contributed £5 towards their building fund.

* *

Comber.—The Sunday school held its annual excursion on 16th August to Greyabbey. The drive from Comber to Greyabbey was much enjoyed by all, and here a very pleasant day was spent on the shore of Strangford Lough. Games of various kinds, races, etc., were indulged in. A visit of inspection by the teachers to the ruins of the Abbey, conducted by Mr. Dunkerley, formed part of the afternoon's programme. The party returned to Comber safely, all pleased with the day's outing.

BIRTH.

PHELPS.—On September 8, at Beechcroft, Holywood, Co. Down, to Rev. and Mrs. G. Leonard Phelps, a son.

*** We are reluctantly compelled this month to hold over important Reports from Ballee, and Larne and Kilwaughter.

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